

Polit. Pamph. vol 134.

LETTER

Humbly submitted to the

PERUSAL AND CONSIDERATION

OF THE

ELECTORS AND PEOPLE

OF

ENGLAND.

BY A GENTLEMAN.



LONDON,
Printed for R. BALDWIN, No. 47, Pater-noster Row.
MDCCCLXXIV.

L E T T E R

Respectfully submitted to the

RESPECTFUL AND CONSIDERATION

OF THE

DIRECTORS AND PEOPLE

ENGLAND

BY A GENTLEMAN



Printed by R. Baldwin, No. 1, St. Paul's Church-yard, London.

TO HIS GRACE

The Duke of RICHMOND.

TH E steady attention to the public cause, and firm attachment to the interest and welfare of Great-Britain, which your Grace has always shewn, whenever an attempt has been made to subvert her liberties and freedom, joined with that amiable character your Grace possesses, exhibits to our view the most uncommon of all phænomena in the present age, A REAL PATRIOT. Your conduct shews that your Grace is fully convinced, that the service of your country is no chimærical,

DEDICATION.

cal, but a real duty. While you continue to exert every means in your power, to keep the cause of Truth and Reason, of Virtue and Liberty alive, you will justly be had in the greatest esteem and regard by every true Briton, and friend to the constitution; but by none more, than

Your GRACE's

Most obedient humble Servant,

The AUTHOR.

A

L E T T E R, &c.

“ Mihi quidem quæ mens suppetit, eloqui non dubi-
“ tabo. cæterum tui erit ingenii probare quæ
“ vera, atque utilia factu putes.”

SAL. DE REP. ORD.

“ Quin accipe tu ea , quæ dicam de summâ Reipub-
“ licæ, quæ profecto aut tu vera invenies, aut
“ certe haud procul a vero.

SAL. DE REP. ORD.

THERE never was a period
more wished for, than the dis-
solution of the present parliament ;
and happy for us this desired period,
agreeable to a settled establishment
of our excellent constitution, is

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near

near at hand. An opportunity then offers to us of applying restorative medicines in order to repair the breaches, that have been made in it from the prejudices of the time, and the corruption of the age. The electors of this kingdom are then called upon to exercise their greatest trust, on which depends every thing that is dear, every thing that is valuable. If we do not exert ourselves at that time, like faithful mariners to save our vessel from the impending storm, we shall deservedly perish in the wreck. We must then use our endeavours to wrest the power of government, if we can, out of hands, that have employed it weakly and wickedly, and place it in others more honest, experienced, and deserving.

As we cannot debate in a collective body, we debate by representation ; and for the welfare of the nation at large, we invest a few members with the power of the whole ; and as the trust is of the utmost importance ; and the honour the greatest we have to confer ; our ancestors provided, that the people should frequently exercise it, that they might reject such as, by their treachery and infidelity, proved undeserving of our confidence, and replace it in others who, from their virtue, honour, and independency, were more fit to be entrusted, as guardians of our lives, liberties, and fortunes. Should we therefore, at the approaching day, be so blind to our interest and welfare as to rely once more on the members of the pre-

sent parliament, and again confide in the greater part of them, what have we not reason to expect? A succeeding bad parliament cannot fail of compleating the ruin of this empire, which has taken so many ages to establish, and which hath long since excited both the envy and admiration of the whole world.

If we consult history, and compare impartially the present state of our country, with that of Rome, Carthage, and others, we shall find that we resemble them most in their declining period. Is it not a duty incumbent on us then? a duty we owe to our country, our honour, our security, to the present and to future ages, that no endeavours be wanting on our
part,

part, to repair the breach that is already made, and is encreasing daily in our constitution.

Our constitution as settled at the glorious Revolution is the best calculated of any for preserving the liberties of the people, for duration, and for promoting the interests and happiness of all its members.* It nearly coincides with Lycurgus's general plan of government, as laid down by Polybius; and had Cicero lived at this time, one would think in his description of the best government that he was speaking of England. “*Statu tuo esse optime constitutam*

* *Cæterum uti fabricata, sic virtute parta, quam magnâ industriâ haberi decet, ne incuria deformentur, aut corruant infirmata. Salust. de rep. ord.*

“ Rem-

“ Rempublicam, quæ ex tribus
 “ generibus illis, regali, optimo,
 “ & populari, confusa modice
 “ nec puniendo irritet animum
 “ immanem ac ferum, nec om-
 “ nia prætermittendo, licentiâ
 “ cives deteriores reddet.”

Such is the true basis of the British constitution, which must absolutely depend upon the just equilibrium preserved between the three constituent powers of King, Lords, and Commons. By the maintenance of which, we are not subject to those various mutations, which so frequently happen in other different forms of government, which must be ever in a fluctuating state, from the complicated variety of the human passions. If we consider attentively we may easily discover from

from this unerring test, whether we are in a flourishing and improving state, or whether and by what degrees we are verging towards ruin. Every unbiaſſed conſiderer will find, that the third, and by far the moſt eſſential part of our conſtitution, hath of late, in the execution of its truſt, exceeded its proper bounds. The Houſe of Commons, for the moſt part actuated by worldly intereſt and ambition, hath uſurped an ariſtocratic power, and having joined its force with the regal, from the influence the crown has over the majority of its members, affords us a melancholy proſpect, which, if not obviated in time, may deprive us of our inestimable liberties, and at laſt terminate in an abſolute monarchy, or, which is equal-

equally to be dreaded, an aristocracy. For though the outward form of government is preserved, yet the essence no longer remains. The revolutions that have happened of late years in mixed governments, by suffering either part to encroach, or any to be diminished, whereby the balance is destroyed, sufficiently prove that the constitutions have altered proportionally for the worse. The Revolution in Denmark in the year 1660, where the monarchy was limited and elective, owing to the oppressions of the nobility, became absolute and hereditary. That which happened in Sweden on the death of Charles XII. that ambitious monarch, who had usurped a despotic power, changed the government into aristocracy.

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And those which have happened within our time, in the governments of both these nations, should make us particularly careful in restraining the encroachments that either part of the constitution may commit, lest we too fatally experience the evil consequences attending them, from our supineness and neglect, when all remedy is placed far beyond our reach.

There have been periods when our government continued free, with strong appearances of becoming absolute; let it be our care, that this government do not become absolute at a future period, with the appearances of being free. It is a difficult undertaking indeed to bring men from strong habits of

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corruption, to prefer honour to profit, liberty to luxury. But the more difficult the more glorious the attempt. We have no reason to despair of success, if we dare to pursue it with courage. Let us exert ourselves at the approaching election to bring back the government from its distracted situation, into its own channel. Let us reject all such as would contaminate our hands by base bribes, and elect men of honour, integrity and abilities. We have it in our power to retrieve our lost credit, and revive our national glory. Our ancestors not only left us the most desirable spot to erect, but laid the foundations of the noblest fabric. As we have received it from their hands as the most valuable

able legacy, nothing should be wanting on our part to prove ourselves worthy of the gift. The wished for port they kept in view, still lies open to us; and if we crowd our sail, and with undaunted spirits, press through the opposing billows, we may with safety reach the promised harbour.

To stem the growing torrent of corruption should be the first, the principal care of every well-wisher to his country. Our ruin is inevitable, if we suffer it to spread. Cast but our eyes on the declension and fall of the Roman empire, and we cannot help reflecting upon the direful catastrophe, which must ever result from corruption, if suffered to continue

and prevail*. Ministers have always gained a most dangerous power from the source of corruption. From this, alone, it is that wicked ministers derive a strength to support them, and the longer it reigns, the more arduous the task becomes of stopping its channel. The spirit of the constitution will revive of course, when corruption ceases to be an expedient of government. Depravation of manners will always expose our constitution to ruin; reformation can only secure it. To preserve liberty by new laws and schemes of government, is absolutely im-

* Post ubi contagio, quasi pestilentia, invasit, civitas immutata, imperium ex justissimo, atque optimo, crudele intolerandumque factum. *Sall. de Bello Cat.*

possible,

possible, whilst the corruption of a people continues and grows.

The destruction of a nation may be effected by the reign of the weakest prince, and the policy of the weakest ministry: for when a people are growing corrupt, there is no need of capacity to contrive, nor of insinuation to gain, nor of plausibility to seduce, nor of eloquence to persuade, nor of authority to impose, nor of courage to attempt.

The most incapable and profligate wretches invested with power, and masters of the purse, will be sufficient for the work, when the people are accomplices in it. The contagion is become so universal that nothing but an uncommon

mon share of virtue can preserve the constitution. To infuse into the minds of men the spirit of the constitution, is the first necessary step to be taken towards a reformation.

It is the duty of those who have the management of free governments, always to the utmost of their power to oppose corruption, otherwise both they and their government must inevitably perish. On the other hand, the monarch who wishes to become absolute, must introduce and encourage it, because he cannot subsist and obtain his ends without it. It is then so natural for all such monarchs to place men in power who pretend to love their persons and will depend upon their pleasure; it would

would be hard to find one in the world, who has not made this the rule of his government. A good man may love a good monarch, and will obey him when he commands that which is just; but no one can engage himself blindly to do whatever he is commanded, without renouncing all virtue and religion, because he knows not whether that which shall be commanded is consistent with either, or directly contrary to the laws of God and man. If a monarch be wicked, and his actions of an evil tendency, whoever bears an affection to him, and second his designs, declares himself an enemy to all that is good; and the advancement of such men to power does not only introduce, foment and encrease corruption;

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but fortifies it in such a manner, that without an entire renovation of the state, it cannot be removed. Ill men may creep into any government, but when the worst are placed nearest to the throne, and raised to honours for being so, they will with that force endeavour to draw all men to a conformity of spirit with themselves, that it can no otherwise be prevented than by destroying them and the principle in which they live*.

In the virtuous times of the Roman Republick, merit alone entitled the possessor to a place in the senate, as well as the chief offices

*—fuit; fuit ista quondam in hâc Rep. virtus, ut viri fortes acrioribus suppliciis cives perniciosos, quam acerbissimos hostes coererent. *Cicero, orat. in Cat.*

of

of the state ; and in every well-governed state, where a value is put upon virtue, and no one honoured unless for such qualities as are beneficial to the publick, men are from the tenderest years brought up in a belief, that nothing in this world deserves to be sought after, but such honours as are acquired by noble and virtuous actions. By this means virtue itself becomes popular, where riches (which with the vanity that follows them, and honours men give to them, are the root of all evil) are either totally banished, or little regarded. The introduction of luxury from Asia preceded the ruin of Carthage ; the Romans also perished by it. Religion, justice, all regard for divine and human laws, were swept away

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at once by the raging torrent. To what purpose have so many heroes devoted their lives, and so many historians their whole days to the service of their country and posterity, in transmitting down from age to age a faithful account of the evils they combated, and the defects of the various constitutions which they knew and experienced, but to excite us to great and virtuous achievements, and to forewarn us of the dangers we may escape, and the happiness we may arrive to, by their writings and examples *. The effects of luxury will prove to what degree it prevails, and

* *Quam multas nobis imagines, non solum ad intuendum, verum etiam ad imitandum, fortissimorum virorum expressas, scriptores & Græci et Latini reliquērunt. Cicero, oratio pro Archiâ poetâ.*

these

these will naturally appear in irreligion, breach of faith, idleness, a contempt of all social duties, extortion, fraud, pride, cruelty, universal venality and corruption*.

That these exist in their fullest force, with many other concomitant evils, the most abandoned cannot deny : and yet we seem patiently to endure the heavy load of oppression and misfortunes, and appear like the Jews, waiting for a Messiah, that may never come ; when a sure and certain remedy lies within our reach, which adverting to in due time, will save us from a sure and certain ruin.

* Pecuniæ cupido fidem, probitatem, cæterasque bonas artes subvertit ; pro his superbiam, crudelitatem, Deos negligere, omnia venalia habere docuit. *Sall. de bello Cat.*

As the legislative power, that is exercised by the parliament, is radically in the people, from whom their delegates receive all that they have ; the nation has a cure within itself for all the evils that beset it, in the choice of a free and virtuous parliament, composed of men entirely unconnected with the court, which at present, instead of being what it ought to be, the palace of a virtuous, noble, and patriotick prince, is the fountain of corruption, the nurse of wickedness, and like Pandora's box, the receptacle of every evil. We have nothing to expect from such men, the actors that tread such a stage, that can be good and advantageous for the nation. The very means and pretensions by which they obtain their honours, places and employ-

ployments are founded on the basest venality : for those who desire to advance themselves near the throne, must use such means as are suitable to the times in which they live, and the humour of those with whom they are to deal. In vain would the most virtuous men, by the most certain proofs of their wisdom, experience, integrity and valour, have expected advancement in the courts of Caligula, Claudius, or Nero, for they hated and feared all who excelled in virtue, and placing the strength of government in the hands of the worst, soon worked the fall of the empire, the attendant consequence on their pride, folly and viciousness. No man pretended to be great in their courts, who had not cast off all thoughts of honour

nour and common honesty. This seems to have been well known in later days, for in the reign of one of the Charles's a nobleman, who was a great enemy to bribery, was turned out from a considerable office, as a scandal to the court; for, said the principal ministry, he will make no profit of his place, and by that means casts a scandal upon those that do. The fountain being thus corrupted, nothing that is pure can flow from it*.

The first object of a king who has ill designs to carry on is to en-

* *Atque ego, multa legendo, multa audiendo, ita comperi, omnia regna, civitates, nationesque eo prosperum imperium habuisse, dum apud eos vera consilia valuerunt; ubicunque gratia, timor, voluptas ea corrupere, post paullo imminutæ opes, deinde ademptum imperium, postremo servitus imposita est.*
Sall. de Rep. ord.

deavour to divide an united people, and by blending, or seeming to blend, his interests with that of a party, he may succeed perhaps, and his party and he may share the spoils of a ruined nation, but such a party is then become a faction, such a king is a tyrant, and such a government is a conspiracy*.

It is by an utter exclusion of courtiers, placemen, and pensioners, from the House of Commons, that we may wish for better times, and ample redress for all our past and present grievances and insults; but if we chuse a parliament com-

* Hæc igitur multitudo primum malis moribus imbuta, deinde in artes, vitasq; varias dispalata, nullo modo inter se congruens, parum mihi quidem idonea videtur ad capeffendam Rempubicam. *Sall. de Rep. ord.*

posed

posed of the same tools as the present, and the same slaves of power, we have every evil to dread ; for these men having entered the track have learnt the vices of those from whom they received their preferment, and to delight in the ways that brought them to it. The emoluments and treasures arising from their offices and employments, for the most part, are dissipated by the worst of vices ; for their servile natures are guided rather by sense than reason : and such as addict themselves to the service of courts find no other consolation, than what they receive from sensual pleasures, or such vanities as they put a value upon. Their only care is to get money for their supply by the most infamous practices. They obtain their offices
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for no other end than for gain, nor take any other way than that which conduces towards the attainment of it. Their riches consist not in spoils taken from their enemies, nor in rewards obtained for long and faithful services to their country, but are the base produce of their corruption. To trust such mercenary wretches with the management of affairs, to confide in such who have already bartered their small share of virtue, honesty, and integrity for titles, honours, and employments, to gratify their pride, add to their wealth, and support their extravagance, would shew to mankind that the welfare of our country was the farthest from our wishes. What have we to expect from such men but treachery,

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who have already been traitors to themselves. Let us for awhile look back and see how offices of justice have been disposed, and on whom places of trust, titles, and honour have been conferred, and all will agree, that they have been given for the vilest and shameful prostitution. Does it not naturally follow from hence that such a race of men, invested with and possessing such a power and influence, will exert their utmost endeavours to introduce that corruption which is so necessary for the defence of their persons, and will certainly attempt every means of accomplishing their great design, unless they are opposed and removed? They must be opposed therefore by a spirit, or hereafter they

they will be opposed in vain *. It was from such a faction that Julius Cæsar put those chains upon his country, which Augustus rivetted beyond a possibility of removal.

Wealth is the certain forerunner of luxury, and luxury necessarily produces corruption.

When luxury becomes the reigning fashion, the ruin of a nation cannot be at a very remote distance ; every hour visibly accelerates its fall, and every dawn of liberty perhaps may be its last. If we have not lost all public spirit, if patriotism is not entirely banished from our veins, it is high time that we should awake from our

* Nonne emori per virtutem præstat, quam vitam miseram, atque inhonestam, ubi alienæ ludibrio fueris, per dedecus amittere ? *Sall. Cat. orat.*

lethargic state, and while we see the evils that surround us pressing on with rapid haste to crush us; while we behold the thunderbolt preparing, red with uncommon wrath to blast our native land, exert our noble endeavours to avert the impending blow. To little purpose did our ancestors spill such profusion of their generous blood, to maintain and fortify the constitution, if we, their degenerate posterity, suffer their bulwarks to decay. No, we must on every occasion encrease and fortify its barriers, and when every opportunity offers erect stronger to support those parts of the fabrick, they left more naked, open, and defenceless*. Un-

* Itaque majores nostri, cum bellis asperimis premerentur, equis, viris, pecuniâ amissâ, nunquam defessi sunt armati de imperio certare.

Unhappy for us who have lived to see a prince taught to believe that the king and people in free governments are rival powers, who stand in competition with one another, who have different interests, and consequently different views; who has from his youth been taught to believe that the rights and privileges of the people are so many spoils taken from the right and prerogative of the crown; and that the rules and laws made for the exercise and security of the former, are so many diminutions of his dignity, and restraints on his power. But let us hope, ere long, that he will see all this in a far different and much

tare. Non inopia ærarii, non vis hostium, non adversa res, ingentem eorum animum subegit; quin quæ virtute ceperant, simul cum animâ retinerent. *Sall. de rep. ord.*

truer

truer light ; that he will reverence the constitution as the law of God and man ; that he will discern that the good of the people is the ultimate and true end of government, and that those who invested him with power, appointed him for this end ; that he will consider himself placed in the most exalted station in this world, and that on his conduct the happiness and welfare of millions depend ; that his situation affords the greatest occasions of exercising every virtue ; that he will distinguish the voice of his people from the clamour of a faction, and will hearken to it ; that he will redress grievances, correct all errors, and reform or punish evil ministers ; *

* Quare capeffe, per deos, rempublicam & omnia aspera pervade ; namque aut tu mederi potes, aut omittenda est cura omnibus. *Sall.*

that

that he is answerable for his conduct both to God and to his country; and lastly, that he will find the first and principal duty incumbent on him to be the maintenance of liberty, and the establishment of a free constitution*.

The parliament being the representative body of the kingdom, is supposed to be the least subject to error, and ought to be most exempted from passion, and most free from corruption, as their own good, both public and private, as well as that of their constituents, depends upon the rectitude of their functions. But the present parliament seems, in their career, to have lost all thought that

* Quo magis tibi etiam atque etiam animo prospiciendum est, quonam modo rem stabilias, communiasque. *Sall. de rep. ord.*

they are as other men, so soon as the session is ended, and that they will soon return again to their private stations; that every thing they have done to the prejudice of their country, will equally affect them and their posterity; that they may one day feel the fatal effects themselves from the violations and enormities they have committed, from the laws they have promulgated contrary to the sense and spirit of the constitution, and from the many stabs they have wantonly given to the ancient liberties and freedom of the people. When we chuse our representatives we reasonably hope that they will take the greatest care of our concerns; that they will faithfully discharge the duties of the impor-

important trust committed to their care ; that if some prove false to their trust, that others will continue unshaken in their integrity ; that if the base arts which are practised by ministers who endeavour to enslave their country, should prevail upon the youngest and weakest, that the wisest will see the snares, and instruct their companions to avoid them. But experience has too well taught us, that parliaments have their failings, and that the vices so industriously spread amongst them may be too prevalent. Do we not daily see many betray the cause of liberty, and act not only without regard, but in direct opposition to the most important interests of their country, not only occasionally by surprise, by weakness, by

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strong temptation, or by sly seduction, but constantly, steadily, by deliberate choice and in pursuance of principles they avow and propagate: we likewise see many others shrink from the service of their country or promote it coolly, indifferently and uncertainly, in subordination to their own interest and humour, or to those of a party *. And we likewise daily see, that to assert the truth, is called spreading of delusion, and by the swarm of smallest flies and meanest reptiles, that constantly buzz about a court, is termed disaffection: and to assert the cause of liberty and good government is deemed sowing of sedition.

* Reliqui de factione sunt inertissimi nobiles, in quibus sicut in statuâ, nihil est aditamenti. *Sall. de rep. ord.*

Look around us against the approaching period, and I think we can find characters worthy of our choice and confidence. Nature has done her part in our age, as well as in former ages, by producing men capable of serving the common-wealth. There are certainly men possessed of honour, probity and independence, and from their virtues deserving of a seat in the grand council of the nation. Nature still continues to sow alike, and it is our own fault if we do not reap alike. By the election of such men only, we can ground our hopes of peace, happiness and security; and should they continue firm in their integrity, they will justly be considered as the guardian angels of the country they inhabit. If we

maintain the laws and that discipline which nourishes virtue, men of wisdom and valour will never be wanting: as every man desires to give testimony of his virtue, when he knows it will be rewarded with honour and power.

As it is our duty to prolong the duration of our constitution, no occasion offers so favourable as the approaching, to draw it back to the first good principles on which it was founded. For when these occasions happen often and are well improved, the government is happy, prosperous and durable; but when they happen, and are ill improved, the political body lives in pain, continues in languor, and dies soon.

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We are, by the situation of our island, possessed of those acquired and natural advantages, which Xenophon required to make his government permanent, and his countrymen invincible. Our wars with foreign powers have made us not only dreaded, but masters of the ocean, and first sovereigns of the world. Whilst we are sensible of our importance abroad, let us beware of the more insidious arts of corruption at home *. Our liberty, our happiness, and very existence as a people depend upon our virtue, and public spirit. Nothing, humanly speaking, but luxury, effeminacy

* Atque ego te oro, hortorque, ne Gallicâ gente subactâ, populi Romani summum atque invictum imperium tabescere vetustate, ac per summam discordiam dilabi patiaris. *Sall. de Rep.*

and

and corruption can ever deprive us of our envied superiority. What an accumulated load of guilt therefore must lie upon this or any future generation, should they, by fostering these evils, precipitate Britain from her towering eminence down to the most abject state, and by suffering them to reign to blast all public virtue in their unlimited progress.

If there is sufficient virtue remaining in us, and I trust that there is, to withstand every temptation that may be offered to bias our inclinations; and to explore and avoid every art and snare that may be laid by the basest slaves at the ensuing election, to lure us to our ruin: in short, if we elect a free and virtuous parliament, we shall

shall soon discover the good effects arising from our choice; in the place of our present grievances and oppressions, from the wisdom and rectitude of their sanctions, concord will appear, brooding peace and prosperity on the happy land.

Such a parliament will not multiply taxes wantonly, nor keep up those unnecessarily which necessity has imposed before. Such a parliament will not suffer the national debts to encrease and continue by all sorts of political and other profusions. Such a parliament will give ease and encouragement to our manufactures at home, will assist and protect our trade abroad, will improve and keep in heart the national colonies, like so many farms of their mother country. Then will joy appear
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sitting in every face, content in every heart; we shall then find no occasion to be alarmed or disturbed; whilst we are employed busily in improving our private property and public stock, fleets will cover the ocean, bringing home wealth by the returns of industry, carrying assistance, or terror abroad, by the direction of wisdom, and asserting triumphantly the right and honour of Great-Britain as far as the waters roll, and as the winds can waft them.

Should we live to see such happy days, especially those who have acted in so glorious a scene, perhaps will call to mind, and in such recollection feel the greatest pleasure possible to be experienced in this world, that he was a man who
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contributed his mite to carry on so good a work, and that he desired life for nothing so much, as to see Great-Britain the first and happiest nation in the universe, and like a good parent, whose utmost wishes were to leave his heirs an estate rather improved than destroyed, an inheritance rather added to than diminished. And that we may behold this glorious scene, let us unite steadily in one common interest, and we shall unite, if we have the public good at heart. No selfish sentiments which are founded on the narrow bottom of little party interests should prevail amongst us. Union can alone retrieve what division has caused us to lament *. Let us soon begin this union, by a co-

* Nam concordia res parvæ crescunt, discordia maximæ dilabuntur. *Sall. de rep. ord.*

alition of parties, and our endeavours must be crowned with success ; and by our conduct, endeavour to shew posterity more striking instances of public virtue, if possible, than have been handed down to us by our fore-fathers. History affords us many instances of worthy citizens, whom no money could bribe, no motives whatever seduce, or allurements withdraw them from the public welfare. We have read of men * who could rise from the plough to the triumphal chariot, and contentedly return thither again. They could not be gained by gold who did not think it necessary : it was in vain to think of bribing men who could with pleasure sup upon

* Cincinnatus, Curius, Fabricius, Paulus Emilius, &c.

the coleworts of their own garden. It was an answer well worthy of a patriot, and firm friend to his country, that Cleanthes made to Aristippus, who told him, that if he would go to court and flatter the tyrant, he need not seek his supper under a hedge; the philosopher answered, that he who could content himself with such a supper need not go to court and flatter any tyrant.

Suffer me now to conclude by calling to the recollection of my countrymen some of the outrages which have wantonly been perpetrated on the very vital parts of our constitution: and they will find, if they consider at all, an absolute necessity, and duty incumbent on them, of exerting

themselves, at the ensuing election, for the purpose of obtaining a free parliament.

There has been ever since the present king first mounted the throne, as it were, a settled and continued plan purposely pursued by his ministers to compleat the ruin of the nation. Corruption has not only been secretly practised at court, but openly avowed as the necessary expedient of government. We have seen the large revenue of the crown profusely squandered away, and employed to corrupt the representatives of the people, and every temptation industriously laid before them, to warp their integrity. We have seen places and titles, honours and emoluments given to the most undeserving,

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ing, as compensations for their shameful treachery and infidelity ; we have seen frequent attacks made upon the liberty of the press, the strongest bulwark of the constitution. We have seen, while the people have been exercising their greatest trust, the right of election utterly subverted by an armed banditti, hired for the most wicked and abominable purposes. We have seen the vile assassins escape from the due punishment of such enormous crimes. We have seen private property, after having been quietly enjoyed for a long term of years, openly invaded by an abandoned tool of administration. We have seen the soldiery (paid and supported by the industry and contributions of the people) brought out on every frivolous pretence,

not only to insult the quiet, peaceable and unarmed subjects of the realm, but to commit what outrages, devastations and murder, their unbounded licentiousness and brutality should chuse * ; and this from royal authority : murder has been committed, and the soldiery publickly thanked for having been the instruments of this horrid massacre. And lastly to compleat the tragedy, we have seen our brethren in America treated as our greatest enemies for not patiently submitting to the most un-

* Alios quidem non armatos, neque in prælio belli jure, per summum scelus interfectos. Plebem Romanam in villâ publicâ pecoris modo concissam. Heu ! quam illa occulta civium funera, & repentinæ cædes in parentum, aut liberorum sinum, fuga mulierum & puerorum, vastatio domorum. *Sall. de rep. ord.*

heard

heard of arbitrary and tyrannick impositions.

If these outrages, with many others that have been committed, will not animate us, and call forth a noble spirit at the approaching day, we are shamefully dwindled from what we ought to be, to what I cannot name. Let us read our fate in the ruins of other once great and powerful empires.

“ Greece, once the nurse of arts
 “ and sciences, the fruitful mother
 “ of philosophers, lawyers, and
 “ heroes, now lies prostrate un-
 “ der the iron yoke of ignorance
 “ and barbarism---Carthage, once
 “ the mighty sovereign of the
 “ ocean, and the center of univer-
 “ sal commerce, which poured the
 “ riches

“ riches of the nations into her
 “ lap, now puzzles the inquisi-
 “ tive traveller in his researches
 “ after even the vestiges of her
 “ ruins---and Rome, the mistress
 “ of the universe, which once
 “ contained whatever was esteem-
 “ ed great and brilliant in human
 “ nature, is now sunk into the
 “ ignoble seat of whatever is ef-
 “ teemed mean and infamous.”

These nations fell by the intro-
 duction of luxury, effeminacy and
 corruption; and as similar causes
 will always produce similar effects,
 such will be the fall of Britain,
 should we suffer them to predo-
 minate.

I cannot conclude the present
 subject, without speaking of a re-
 markable

markable law enacted by Solon, the wise Athenian legislator, which declared “ every man infamous, “ who, in any civil dissension in “ the state, should continue neutral, and refuse to side with either “ party.” Aulus Gellius gives a more particular account of this uncommon law, and affirms the penalty to have been no less than the confiscation of all the effects and banishment of the delinquent. So remarkable as it appears, if we reflect, we shall discover it to have been built upon the wisest reasons ; for he intended that no citizen should be so unfeeling with respect to the public welfare, as not to sympathise with the distress and calamities of his country, but that he should immediately join the honest and juster party, and

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risque every thing in the defence of the common cause, and in support of the liberties of his country. This law should *virtually* be received by us, and every free people, as it is plainly founded upon that relation which every member bears to the body politic, and that interest which every individual is supposed to have in the good of the whole community.

Those who have the welfare of Great-Britain at heart, must and will think themselves virtually bound by a similar law: and as iniquitous combinations are forming by administration, and the enemies to our constitution (who, upon their canvasses to represent the people in parliament, always wear the mask of hypocrisy and dissimulation)

lation) to bias their inclinations, and to lure them to their ruin at the approaching season ; it is our duty not to be backward in uniting in one common interest, to destroy their wicked machinations, and defeat their abominable purposes. We must endeavour in our several neighbourhoods, and wherever we are entitled to a vote as freeholders, burgeses or freemen, to forward and establish *associations* for the purpose of nominating and supporting gentlemen of virtue, honour and integrity. The times call aloud for such associations ; the state of the kingdom makes such a measure absolutely necessary : it is the first and principal object that we ought to determine and fix our minds upon, and so much to the interests of the nation, that its glo-

ry and prosperity must encrease or diminish in proportion as we enter into them and maintain them with spirit. The end of such associations must be to abolish those septennial scenes of drunkenness, riot, bribery and abandoned perjury, by continually mixing with the lower class of electors, (who for the most part have not sense to discern the fatal consequences attending their shameful venality) and using the strongest arguments of reason we are capable of, to put a stop to their receiving pecuniary advantages for their voice and interest; by explaining to them how they sin against posterity, as well as against their own age, by the shameful trafficks of their votes; and by pointing out to them the consequences of their crimes, and fatal tendency

tendency of their bad examples. Thus by propagating principles of religion, virtue, honour and independency, we may be enabled speedily to root out every species of bribery and corruption.

After having formed associations, we must first consider of gentlemen who are worthy of our esteem and confidence ; let *merit alone* entitle them to our favour, and having impartially weighed their separate virtues and amiable qualifications one with another, select the most distinguished from the rest, invite them to stand forward at the critical juncture, and become without the least expence to themselves the representatives of a free people.

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How can the people be so idle as to imagine, that those who expend such immense sums of money at elections for the sake of obtaining a seat in parliament, can ever have the interest of their constituents, and the good of the nation at heart! Did they intend to act honestly by the people, they would never squander away their patrimony in so profuse and scandalous a manner. Experience has taught us, that their sole aim when in the senate is to obtain places and emoluments from the hands of any minister, to forward the most iniquitous schemes, and to add their own weight and suffrages to support the oppressors and Tyrants of the nation. Such men propose to themselves a separate interest from that of their country. They sustain

tain it through the whole piece, and make their actions in every manner conformable to it. By the choice of such slaves, who are so given to dissipation, we add our sanction to tyranny, and elect the oppressors, instead of the protectors of the constitution.

On the declension of the Roman empire, from the corruption of their manners, Cato proposed a severe law, enforced by the sanction of an oath, against bribery and corruption at elections where the shameful traffic of votes was established by custom, as at a public market. Many sumptuary laws were also made to restrain the various excesses of luxury: and yet all these efforts proved too feeble to check the overbearing violence

violence of the torrent. We have similar laws still existing in our own country, made upon the same occasion, and yet they are either evaded by chicane, or over-ruled by power. This alone is sufficient to prove the necessity of various associations over the kingdom, of those virtuous citizens who know the value of their birth-right liberty, in order to obtain a free representation. I must therefore exhort my countrymen again to adopt this *only* salutary measure of *association*. Our ancestors may evidently appear, not only to have intended well, but to have taken a right course to accomplish what they intended. This had effect as long as the cause continued: and the only fault that can be ascribed to that which they established

blished, is, that it has not proved to be perpetual. If we will be just to our ancestors, it will become us in our time rather to pursue what we know they intended, and by new constitutions to repair the breaches made upon the old, than to accuse them of the defects that will for ever attend the actions of men. Taking our affairs at the worst we shall soon find, that if we have the same spirit they had, we may easily restore our nation to its ancient liberty, dignity and happiness ; and if we do not, the fault is owing to ourselves, and not to any want of virtue and wisdom in them.

Combinations and societies of all virtuous and good citizens who have ever been the strength of the

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government, from the influence their noble and generous conduct will have over the lower class of people, can alone insure a free parliament, and promise the duration of our constitution. The only design of this paper, is to warn my countrymen of the fatal consequences which must inevitably result should they not exert themselves at this critical juncture ; and to inculcate the necessity of that national union, and association of honest citizens upon which the strength, the security and the duration of a free state must eternally depend.



